Going through the Gospels – Bible Study Series

The Miracles of Jesus Christ
(Article)

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Introduction

After Jesus had said this, He called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"
The man who had been dead came out with his hands and feet bound in strips of linen, and his face wrapped in a cloth.
(John 11:43-44 BSB)

In the above verses, we see and hear Jesus Christ, through the power of His voice, bringing back to life a dead man named 'Lazarus' (John 11). This is one of many 'miracles' (or signs) Jesus did, among many others recorded in the New Testament and among those in the Old Testament. This points us to Christ's own life, death and resurrection, an event that reveals the basis and absolute uniqueness of Christianity.

In order to assess the significance of Jesus' miracles, the following provides a response to seven questions people often ask.

One: What is a miracle?
Two: Why did Jesus perform miracles?
Three: What kinds of miracle did Jesus do?
Four: What do Jesus' miracles teach us?
Five: What miracles did His disciples do?
Six: What miracles continued in the Apostolic Age?
Seven: Are there miracles today?

What is a Miracle?

Men of Israel, listen to this message: Jesus of Nazareth was a man certified by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. He was delivered up by God's set plan

and foreknowledge, and you, by the hands of the lawless, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead, releasing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for Him to be held in its clutches.
(Acts 2:22-24 BSB)

What is a Miracle? While it is not easy to answer this question, the Bible helps us in developing a definition. As such, a biblical miracle can be defined as “a less common kind of God’s activity in which he arouses people’s awe and wonder and bears witness to Himself.” (1) From this perspective, a biblical miracle is not simply a spectacle, but rather a sign which tells us more about God’s character as He works sovereignly through supernatural acts to reveal the arrival of His heavenly kingdom. (2) In the Old Testament (OT) miracles are often signs (Exodus 4:8; 8:23) revealing God’s sovereignty and divine power at work. (3) So, as it stands, in the Bible we can identify three main periods in which miracles occurred: that is, at the time of Moses (see Chart D) and Joshua, at the time of the prophets Elijah and Elisha and at the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles. (4)

With Jesus Christ arriving on earth as ‘God in the Flesh,’ we discover in Scripture many ‘signs,’ that is miracles confirming Jesus’ identity as Savior of the world, the Messiah, who leads unbelievers to faith in Him. (5) Hereby, as we learn mainly in the Gospels, there are many supernatural events visible, such as angels announcing His virgin conception and birth (Luke 1:26-38), God confirming Jesus as Messiah (Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34), the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:37-43), His resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-9) and His ascension into heaven (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-11). (See Chart B).

While there are also some examples of ‘false’ signs in the Bible, which are done by evil people, whose hearts are not bent toward God, such as Pharaoh’s magicians in the OT (Exodus 7:20-22; 8:6-7), Simon, the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24) and ‘Bar-Jesus,’ the sorcerer (Acts 13:6-11). By contrast, ‘true’ signs (miracles) which are from God, are found uniquely expressed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John, for example, we find several such signs: water changed to wine (John 2:1-11), healing the official’s son (John 4:46-54), healing the invalid (John 5:1-15), feeding the multitude (John 6:5-13), walking on the water (John 6:16-21), healing the man born blind (John 9:1-7) and the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44). (See Chart C). These miracles Jesus did to reveal His divine glory and stimulate faith. (6)

It is foremost this last ‘sign’ Jesus performs - the raising of Lazarus - that points directly to Himself, namely His own death and resurrection. This brings us back to the Bible verse above, which is the Apostle Peter addressing the crowd after the Holy Spirit arrives at Pentecost, as Jesus had promised. It is Christ’s resurrection that is referred to by Peter in his witness and testimony about Jesus (Acts 2:22-24). Therefore, when we consider what

a miracle is: it is primarily Jesus Christ Himself, coming as 'God in the Flesh,' dying on the cross to atone for our sins, and His resurrection, ascension and sending the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit to all believers.

Jesus' miracles also attest and confirm God's Word, the Bible, so just as every Word Jesus speaks, and every miracle he performs is true, these are verified by His resurrection. So, instead of unexplainable myths, or man-made stories, we are dealing here with miracles as events, incidents and facts. We are dealing with God's self-revelation of Himself in and through Jesus Christ, that is His authenticity, reliability and absolute truth (John 14:6; 15:5); which we are looking at in more detail in the next segment.

Why did Jesus Perform Miracles?

Then John's disciples informed him about all these things. So John called two of his disciples and sent them to ask the Lord, "Are You the One who was to come, or should we look for someone else?"
When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to ask, 'Are You the One who was to come, or should we look for someone else?' "
At that very hour Jesus healed many people of their diseases, afflictions, and evil spirits, and He gave sight to many who were blind. So He replied, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the one who does not fall away on account of Me."
(Luke 7:18-23 BSB)

Having established a definition for biblical miracles, we are now addressing the question: Why did Jesus perform miracles? If we understand His miracles as signs, there are several points we can make to answer this question.

First, as we consider the above verse, we see that Jesus' miracles point to Himself (see Chart A), thereby authenticating Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah (7) and, especially, providing evidence that His message is genuine. (8)

Second, Jesus' miracles are fulfilment of OT prophecy as we see in the Gospel of Luke where Jesus is referring to Himself from the book of the prophet Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on Me,
because He has anointed Me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

(Luke 4:18-19 BSB)

As such, we see not only prophecy fulfilled, but also realize there is a balance between Jesus' miracles and His teaching (His message). (9) Likewise, related to Jesus' response to John the Baptist's inquiry, we see the testimony about Christ being confirmed in Himself:

Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had first been baptizing, and He stayed there. Many came to Him and said, "Although John never performed a sign, everything he said about this man was true." And many in that place believed in Jesus.
(John 10:40-42 BSB)

What matters here is that, not only do the miracles point to Christ, but also that the miracles in and by themselves are not what people ought to focus on; it is Jesus who we are called to seek. (10)

Third, along with the fulfillment of prophecy, comes the uniqueness of Jesus' miracles, namely the restoration of sight to the blind. This specific 'sign,' giving sight to the blind is not found anywhere in the OT. (11) At the same time, this aspect of blindness also refers to spiritual blindness, that is - unrepentant hearts and unbelief as evidenced, for example, in the healing of the blind man in John 9. Here, the Pharisees who claim to be God's representatives and spiritual leaders of the people, are actually blind, since they reject Jesus as the Messiah. (12)

They could have embraced the truth as found in Scripture, such as Psalm 146:8, "The Lord opens the eyes of the blind," (13) but they rejected the truth, along with Jesus. Their rejection echoes the woes to all unrepentant people Jesus makes (Luke 10:13) and the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which the Pharisees commit in Luke 11, along with Jesus' woes against the Pharisees and Experts in the Law, a warning of the reality and horror of hell for all unbelievers on Judgment Day. (14)

Fourth, in addition to the healing of the blind as absolutely unique sign, Jesus points to His own identity through these miracles. Christ even tells us this Himself:

"If I am not doing the works of My Father, then do not believe Me. But if I am doing them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works themselves, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father."
(John 10:37-38 BSB)

“Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me—or at least believe on account of the works themselves.”
(John 14:11 BSB)

At the very least, Jesus’ miracles are done to draw attention to Himself, and to confront people about his identity. (15) In other words, this is the main reason Jesus performs miracles. His teaching - effectively, every word He speaks - cannot be separated from doing miracles, since He has authenticated Himself as Messiah. (16)

Ultimately, the miracles, as signs and works reveal a deeper reality, which is the salvation Jesus Christ offers. (17) His salvation offer is primarily revealed in the resurrection, which He talks about as He clears the Temple:

Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.”
“This temple took forty-six years to build,” the Jews replied, “and You are going to raise it up in three days?”
But Jesus was speaking about the temple of His body. After He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this. Then they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.
(John 2:19-22 BSB)

It is here where we see the essence of Christianity, which is the *only* belief system (religion or worldview) which bases its main claim on the resurrection of its divine founder, Jesus Christ. (18)

Fifth, miracles attest to Jesus’ divine authority, as signs pointing to God’s authority and indicating a deeper reality. (19) Christ’s divine authority and lordship are confirmed in the range of His miracles, that is His complete authority over all the earth and the spiritual realm - casting out demons - and, astoundingly, even over life and death (Matthew 8:1-4, 5-13, 23-27, 28-34 and Matthew 9:18-26). (20)

Sixth, in and through Jesus and his miracles, we see the in-breaking of the kingdom of God (Matthew 4:23; 9:35). Ever since the fall of mankind (Genesis 3) Jesus’ coming on the scene, primarily shows God’s restoration of sinners to Himself. Even more so, we learn that Jesus’ first coming is restoring all things to Himself, to be completed at His Second Coming. (21) Along with this, Jesus’ ministry of word and deed is designed to draw a regenerate person to come to Him in faith and repentance. (22)

To sum up, we now have a better understanding of why Jesus performed miracles. As seen, His miracles authenticate His message, that is the message of the gospel, an aspect even some Pharisees acknowledged. (23)

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs You are doing if God were not with him.”
(John 3:1-2 BSB)

Also, OT prophecy is fulfilled, as was prophesied, for example, through Isaiah (Isaiah 29:18; 32:3; 35:5-6), uniquely in giving sight to the blind. (24) In addition, the miracles point to Christ’s identity as Messiah, underscored by the revelation of His divine authority in word and deed - as manifested in His raising of Lazarus from the dead, for example, simply by using His voice, “Lazarus, come out” (John 11:43-44). Lastly we are witnessing the in-breaking of God’s kingdom through Christ’s miracles, which are not simply a promise, but are an actualization of God’s kingdom, which will reach its climax and consummation at Christ’s Second Coming. (25)

What Kinds of Miracles did Jesus Do?

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering acute pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed—and He healed them. The large crowds that followed Him came from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.
(Matthew 4:23-25 BSB)

Having explored the reasons for why Jesus performed miracles, we now are investigating what *kinds* of miracles Jesus did. In order to do this, we need to consider miracles as they occurred throughout the Bible, that is miracles in the OT, miracles in the NT and then, lastly, the miracles unique to Jesus. That way we are given a better understanding of the work and mission of Jesus Christ.

The first series of miracles in the OT - that is ‘signs’ revealing God’s power - are those found in Exodus with Moses at the burning bush, the ten plagues, and the parting of the Red Sea - all related to God interceding on behalf of His people, the Israelites, freeing them from Egyptian oppression and slavery. This series continues as Joshua (having taken over leadership from Moses) leads the people to cross the Jordan, witnesses Jericho’s fall and the Battle of Gibeon. (26) Such miracles (‘signs and wonders’) point directly

to Yahweh (God), which is the most important aspect about God performing them. (27)

The second series of miracles in the OT, occur in a period in which many people had turned away from God, to worship idols. As such, God revealed Himself through 'signs' in the ministry of Elijah and Elisha. Verifying Himself as the One and Only true God, the Lord had Elijah call down fire from heaven, in the contest against false prophets at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:36-37). This resulted in the confirmation and restoration of true worship. (28)

Similarly, Elisha, having succeeded Elijah, performs God-given signs: such as feeding a large group of people using limited means, healing a man of leprosy (2 Kings 4:42-44; 5:1-14) - to name just a few - as manifestations of God fulfilling His Word through the prophet. (29) Notably too, is the event surrounding the floating ax head, with God working supernaturally at the command of a prophet (2 Kings 5:1-7). (30) What matters here is that God reveals Himself through this prophetic sign, authenticating Himself in the prophet's word, serving as His divine agent. (31)

In the NT, we learn about the third series of miracles accomplished through Jesus Christ and the Apostles. We should note here, that there are parallels found in the miracles performed by Jesus in the works of Elijah and Elisha in the OT (1 and 2 Kings). (32) Since we are looking at the work of the Apostles in more detail (in a subsequent part), we are just generally mentioning in passing, that 'signs' here are related to supernatural events directly linked to the sharing of the 'Good News' (the gospel. (33)

This brings us to miracles *unique* to Jesus. In the above Bible passage (Matthew 4:23-25) we get a sense of the kinds of miracles Jesus did. What stands out is not only the kinds of miracles Christ performed, but also the sheer amount of His miracles. Considering the miracles ('signs') we have in the OT, we realize there is a sense of continuity in Jesus' work, and yet, His 'signs' stand out for a number of reasons:

First, while Jesus never performed any miracles during His childhood or early manhood (34) living in relative obscurity - once He arrives onto the scene - His teaching and work (miracles) come to pass in an almost explosive way.

Second, His miracles are hard to grasp altogether, or even classify (see Chart A for a basic overview of Jesus's miracles). Among the reasons for this is, that there is no clear distinction between the works He does - as Jesus heals people, casts out demons and performs nature miracles. (35)

Third, all Jesus' miracles are unique in that there is no single identical method He uses to perform them. For example, in Mark 5:1-20 Jesus' exorcism centers around a man possessed by a legion of demons. After our Lord casts them out, sending them into a herd of pigs, the pigs show suicidal behaviour in that they rush into a steep bank into the sea and drown. (36) Again, this is just one of many examples showing that Jesus is not limited in any way or method to perform His miracles.

All of this helps us understand that what is being revealed to us it is not primarily about the kinds of miracles Jesus does, but points us to their purpose. To better illustrate this we can consider the way the Gospel of John records seven ‘signs’ (miracles) Jesus does to help us understand His miracles. (37) (38) On the one hand, the purpose of Christ’s miracles is to demonstrate Jesus’ authority over everything, including life and death. (39) On the other hand, and just as important, Jesus’ miracles always point back to Himself. We see this in the way John’s Gospel records, Jesus’ “I am” sayings as they link back to the OT in Exodus 3:14 and Isaiah’s references to God’s absolute uniqueness (e.g. Isaiah 41:10; 43:10; 45:18). Thus, these pointers are different ways of referring to Christ as ‘God in the Flesh,’ the Messiah. (40)

To sum up, Jesus’ miracles are hard (if even at all possible) to classify, let alone group together. A basic approach is to look at his miracles as nature miracle, exorcism, healing - and bringing the dead back to life. Taken together, these miracles demonstrate His unique power over everything. (41)

Also, Jesus’ miracles are all unique, since they do not follow an identical predictable pattern, or similar method. This is important, since Christ does not perform miracles for their own sake, but for His own glory. God’s power is at work here, and the miracles, thus, serve as an irrefutable truth, namely the arrival (and coming consumation) of God’s kingdom, with Jesus as ‘Lord of Lords’ and ‘King of Kings.’ (42)

Lastly, the purpose of His miracles is far more important than anything else. As seen, in the Gospel of John, the miracles are ‘signs’ that point back to Himself. That is, they function to reveal and help us understand the message of Jesus, which is the gospel. (43) Salvation is found only in Jesus. Hence, as we consider the opening Bible verse, we see that it is Christ who is and has given us His eternal promise through His atoning work on the cross - His death and resurrection, as well as the Holy Spirit, and His Word, that is the Bible - and everything it contains to help us grow in our personal relationship with Him: the most amazing miracle of all.

What Do Jesus’ Miracles Teach Us?

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.
(John 20:30-31 BSB)

After pondering the kinds of miracles Jesus did, we are considering here what Jesus' miracles *teach* us. This was mentioned briefly in the previous segment, since we realize that His miracles are more than just miracles for miracles' sake, but serve a more profound purpose, namely pointing to Himself as Messiah. In order to address the initial question, we are looking here at: a brief general consideration of what Jesus' miracles mean, how they reveal Jesus as 'God in the Flesh,' the work of the Holy Spirit, the fact of Christ's resurrection, that eternal salvation is through Christ only, the difference between belief (faith) vs. unbelief, and lastly, our Lord's miracles as God's grace.

First, in general - following the initial Bible passage, the main teaching or lesson for us - is, that Jesus' miracles are designed to reveal and edify, namely revealing God's plan of salvation for mankind through Christ. (44) Along with this, His miracles are manifestation of God's kingdom having arrived (45) and ultimately point to the death and resurrection of Christ. (46)

Second, the miracles show us that Jesus is 'God in the Flesh,' and as such are not mere spectacles, but rather signs pointing back to Him. (47) This is important, since Jesus claims that He is the Messiah, the 'anointed One' (Hebrew) and 'Christ' (Greek). (48) Thus, His miracles are affirmations of His divine identity and messiahship. The works of God He does, are signs that point to the truth of His identity, along with OT prophecy applied and fulfilled in Himself (Matthew 11:4-5). (49)

Third, Jesus' miracles teach us, especially in casting out demons - that the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is at work in Him (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus reveals the power and work of the Holy Spirit in Himself as He shows His power over the spiritual realm and surpassing the power and abilities of Satan, the devil (Luke 11:20). Worth noting here, is that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (John 16:5-11) and after His resurrection and ascension, fulfills His promise at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). (50)

Fourth, Christ's miracles reveal the truth and fact of the resurrection. While done in a different and often unique way, each of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) tell us about the events surrounding the day of Christ's resurrection. The Bible tells us that the sign (or 'miracle') of the resurrection took place 'on the third day,' following our Lord's crucifixion, what we refer to today as 'Easter Day,' just as Jesus had Himself predicted (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31-33; Luke 9:21-22) (51). As such, with the incarnation of Jesus Christ (conceived through the Holy Spirit) and His resurrection from the dead, we see the most important 'miracles' ever recorded in the history of mankind. (52)

Fifth, what follows from Christ's resurrection is that eternal salvation is through Jesus Christ only. Hence, considering our opening Bible verse again here (John 20:30-31), the miracles - foremost, the 'miracle' of our Lord's resurrection - shows God's provision of salvation for any believer, along with providing the adequate basis of our faith in Christ, believing in His works, as

well as - especially - His words (John 6:38; 8:30). (53) Here, we are reminded by Jesus Christ Himself, as He says:

> Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
> (John 14:6 BSB)

Sixth, Jesus' miracles reveal the response of people's hearts, that is belief (faith) vs. unbelief. So here we see - similar to His teaching - that Jesus' miracles *provoke* both belief and unbelief. (54) Thus, when the religious leaders demand a sign ('miracle') from Jesus (Matthew 12:39; 16:4; Luke 11:16, 29; John 4:48) this is a form of unbelief, since there is no response to the signs Jesus has already revealed. (55) This unbelief is then expressed in it its most characteristic form, when the religious leaders, having just witnessed a miracle by Jesus, commit 'the unpardonable sin,' by accusing Him of casting out demons, as a result of Him apparently being possessed by Beelzebub (that is Satan) (Mark 3:22-30; Matthew 12:22-30; Luke 11:14-23). (56)

We see here the hostility towards Jesus also found in the response of His own family, since His own brothers were aware of His miracles, but did not believe in Him (John 7:3-5). (57) This is crucial for us to understand, since a life of faith in Christ leads to God's blessing, whereas unbelief is rebellion against God, and leads to eternal separation from God (hell). (58)

This brings us to our seventh, and last point, that is Jesus' miracles teaching us about God's grace, as expressed through Christ Himself. As we had just seen in point six, belief (that is faith in Christ) is an outworking of understanding Christ's miracles as acts of God's grace. In other words, for every believer there has to be some form of transformation, or 'circumcision of the heart,' (Deuteronomy 10:16-17) as a result of having received God's miracle of grace. (59) The importance of this is that believers are not to rely on miracles as such - as astonishing as they may be - but fully on God's grace, with the Holy Spirit working in and through our hearts and lives. We see this expressed in the Bible, when Jesus sternly admonishes the people for their dependence on "signs and wonders" (John 4:46-54). (60)

In its most profound manifestation the absence of God's grace in a person's heart can be seen when Jesus performs the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11) revealing the penultimate hardness of heart of the Jewish leaders (John 12). Despite Jesus working mightily in word and deed these leaders not only reject Jesus (and thereby God's grace), but also plot and pursue to put Jesus to death on the cross. (61) Thus, miracles in and by themselves mean nothing, unless a person truly embraces God's grace, having a heart truly bent towards Jesus - and realizing the magnitude of Jesus' suffering on the cross (along with mankind's inability to save

ourselves, based on our own merit - apart from God), as part of understanding Jesus as the true Messiah. (62)

To conclude, Jesus' miracles teach us many different things. As seen, they teach us that God's kingdom has been initiated (to be consummated at Jesus' Second Coming on Judgment Day) and point to our Lord's divinity as 'God in the Flesh,' revealing Him as eternal King, the Messiah. (63) In addition, along with showing us the power of the Holy Spirit at work, Jesus' miracles are neither magic, nor spectacle, but the reality of Satan's defeat (Luke 10:18) (to be finalized at the Second Coming), revealed primarily through His exorcisms and His own resurrection (64) providing a demonstration of the reality of God's earthly kingdom. (65)

As it stands, Jesus' resurrection is not only a fact, but also a stern warning to those who decide not to repent and surrender to Him (John 3:16-21). Christ's resurrection is an absolute affirmation of Jesus as God's Messiah (66) and to know that eternal salvation is *only* in and through faith in Christ. Also, His miracles are part of a Christians understanding of God's work, whereas unbelievers - often by default - deny the supernatural. (67)

Faith in Christ, is revealed not primarily in a miracle as viewed unto itself, but is seen in those who truly believe in Christ - to whom the miracle points - revealing Him as the Messiah. An example of this can be seen in Luke 18:35-43 where Jesus heals a blind beggar, who not only receives his sight, but becomes a disciple of Jesus, willing to follow Him (v. 42-43) as Christ is on His way to the cross. (68)

Finally, among the most profound lessons Jesus' miracles teach us, we see that they are signs pointing to God's grace. The raising of Lazarus is such a sign and reveals Christ's glory as sovereign Creator, as well as the ultimate authority over the material and spiritual realm, along with His unlimited grace, mercy and love for all who will ever believe in Him. (69) This brings us to the next segment in which we are investigating what miracles Jesus' disciples did and what we can learn from this.

What Miracles Did The Disciples Do?

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go onto the road of the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.
Do not carry any gold or silver or copper in your belts. Take no bag for the road, or second tunic, or sandals, or staff; for the worker is worthy of his provisions.
Whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy there and stay at his house until you move on. As you enter the home, greet its occupants. If the home is worthy, let your peace rest on it; but if it is not, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not welcome you or heed your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.” (Matthew 10:5-15 BSB)

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After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place He was about to visit. And He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest.
Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Carry no purse or bag or sandals. Do not greet anyone along the road.
Whatever house you enter, begin by saying, ‘Peace to this house.’ If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay at the same house, eating and drinking whatever you are offered. For the worker is worthy of his wages. Do not move around from house to house.
If you enter a town and they welcome you, eat whatever is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’

But if you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go into the streets and declare, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off as a testimony against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town” (….)
The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name.”
So He told them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”
(Luke 10:1-12, 17-20 BSB)

Having considered what Jesus’ miracles teach us, we are now looking into what miracles Jesus’ disciples did and what we can learn from this.

To begin with we have to clarify what we mean by ‘disciple.’ In the NT, the term ‘disciple’ (Greek: *mathetes*) means *to learn*, so a disciple is a learner or pupil. (70) This concept of discipleship was common in Jesus’s time, familiar in Judaic culture, and it was expected that a disciple was to become like his teacher both in word and deed, reflecting the teacher’s character. So in the Gospels, we see two manifestations of this in the life and ministry of Jesus:

The first is the twelve disciples He selects instructing them to teach and serve (Mark 3:14) - which later, after Christ’s resurrection and ascension, became His ‘apostles,’ minus Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed Him, along with the Apostle Paul (in the Book of Acts). The second group of disciples during Jesus’ ministry refers to a broader group, of which we learn more when Jesus sends them out as the Seventy-two (Luke 10:1-12, 17-20). (71) These two groups are our focus here.

Following the initial Bible passage above - the Ministry of the Twelve (also found in Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6) we see that (at that time) Jesus expected these disciples to perform specific miracles, of which some come about, others do not, i.e. the twelve do not raise the dead, and do not cleanse lepers. What stands out here is that for the miracles they did perform, which are certainly impressive, they are linked to Christ and His message. (72)

Jesus expects these disciples to replicate His ministry, yet at the time, to stay within the confines of Israel. As such, they are God’s witnesses, initiating, but not exceeding Chris’s own divine authority. Being paired two by two, there is a judicial aspect to this mission, seen in their ‘shaking off the dust off their feet,’ for those who reject them, and thereby Christ’s offer of salvation. (73) The miracles the disciples do, such as driving out demons and healing many sick people, are inseparably linked to their preaching on repentance (Mark 6:12-13). (74)

In sending out the Seventy-two, the second group of disciples - as seen in the above Scripture passage - is similar to the first group in that Jesus expects His followers to heal the sick, along with announcing that God's kingdom is near (Luke 10:8-9). The factuality of this event and missional work of this second group is underscored by Jesus' instructions of accepting hospitality from those they encounter, an idiosyncratic Judean tradition at the time. (75)

What stands out in this account, even more so than the miracles themselves, is found in the details of the joyful return, as these disciples exclaim to Jesus: "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name" (Luke 10:17). Here (in v. 19) we are reminded that it is Christ and Him only who has power over Satan and the demonic realm. The "treading on snakes and scorpions," explains the power and protection of God *through Jesus Christ*. Likewise, the way to be humble (v. 20) shows that it is Christ's power (not mere human self-reliance) that leads to victory, and His disciples are to set their hearts and minds on the things in heaven above. (76)

To sum up, reflecting on what miracles the disciples did during Jesus' ministry, we see that there are differences between Christ's ability and work and that of the disciples (both the twelve and the seventy-two). As seen, there are some miracles, such as raising the dead (in the Gospels), was something only Jesus accomplished. Alongside His miracles such as the cleansing of lepers, and the ability and authority to forgive sins, this is singular to Christ - as the Bible records in the healing of a paralytic (Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26). (77)

In a similar way, there is an incident in which Christ's disciples were not able to perform a miracle, as seen in the healing of the epileptic boy (Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43). What figures prominently here is *not* the disciples *inability*, but Christ's *unique authority*, pointing back to His God-given divine authority, since He does cast out the demon. (78) We learn here, that faith always has as its aim, Christ and His Kingdom, rather than doing things in our own human limitations. (79)

Furthermore, we see that Jesus' miracles and other actions, are unique signs that always point to Himself - taking children into his arms, washing the feet of the disciples and His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, for instance. (80) This becomes crucial for us to understand as we consider healing and 'miracles' in the Apostolic Age, since we must never forget that it is Jesus who empowers us, not we of ourselves. (81) In the end, what really matters for us as believers, is not miracles in and of themselves, but our gracious gift of God's salvation. (82)

We see what really matters here is not so much the miracles the disciples did, but primarily the required disposition of heart for anyone who repents and surrenders to Christ and follows Him, effectively, displaying a humble and obedient heart attitude as we read in Jesus' prayer of thanksgiving:

At that time Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and declared, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was well-pleasing in Your sight.
All things have been entrusted to Me by My Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.”
Then Jesus turned to the disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”
(Luke 10:21-24 BSB)

This brings us to consider the miracles we find recorded in the NT, after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, found in the Book of Acts.

What Miracles Continued in the Apostolic Age?

Men of Israel, listen to this message: Jesus of Nazareth was a man certified by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. He was delivered up by God’s set plan and foreknowledge, and you, by the hands of the lawless, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead, releasing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for Him to be held in its clutches.
(Acts 2:22-24 BSB)

Having risen and ascended to heaven, in this segment we are exploring which miracles continued in the Apostolic Age.

As mentioned earlier an ‘apostle’ is a specific kind of disciple of Christ. The Apostles (minus Judas Iscariot) along with other disciples continued God’s work as the early church begins, which we read about in the Bible, primarily in the Book of Acts. The Apostles, now including Paul, are specifically chosen by Jesus, from among all the other disciples, as “twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:14) distinguishing them from other believers in the early church, primarily by the unique ‘signs’ (miracles) they performed. (83)

So, for example, the Bible tells us that it was only the Apostle Peter (Acts 9:36-43) and the Apostle Paul (Acts 20:7-12) who brought a person back to life from the dead. (See Chart F). This specific ‘sign’ or miracle (not the same as the future *resurrection* of believers) was God’s confirmation of

their status as ‘apostle,’ alongside other miracles they performed in their ministry (2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4). (84) This does not mean that miracles do not occur anymore, but it does mean that there are no longer ‘apostles’ in the sense of the aforementioned context.

What matters most here (which we are now considering) is the work of the Holy Spirit, what the miracles in the Book of Acts tell us, and how they relate to the message of the gospel.

Preceding the opening Bible verse (Acts 2:22-24) in which the Apostle Peter calls people to repentance, Scripture tells us about the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.
Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came from heaven and filled
the whole house where they were sitting. They saw tongues like flames of
fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. And they were all filled
with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit
enabled them.
Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation
under heaven. And when this sound rang out, a crowd came together in
bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking his own language.
Astounded and amazed, they asked, “Are not all these men who are speaking
Galileans? How is it then that each of us hears them in his own native
language? Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea
and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the
parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome, both Jews and converts to
Judaism; Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in
our own tongues!”
Astounded and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”
But others mocked them and said, “They are drunk on new wine!”
(Acts 2:1-13 BSB)

The Coming of the Holy Spirit is a unique event recorded only in the Bible - a promise Jesus makes, prior to His resurrection and ascension (John 14:16-17, 26). This event, which is a different (superior) category than miracles, is special, since it is one of the singular hallmarks of Christianity. What is happening here, the comprehension of other languages (not to be confused with ‘speaking in tongues’) marks the beginning of the apostles’ ministry on the Day of Pentecost. At the close of the Apostolic Age, and the continuation of the church age, with all NT books in circulation, this specific sign was no longer needed (since it is now recorded for us in the Bible). (85)

What matters here, is that ‘speaking in tongues’ is *not a requirement* for a person to receive salvation through Jesus Christ. Likewise, as we learn

from the Apostle Peter's response - in addition to refuting the false charge of being drunk - He explains the basic parts in the life of a converted person (Acts 2:37-39): Repentance, being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, having one's sins forgiven and receiving the Holy Spirit. Important here is that there is no pre-set method, nor mechanism, nor order in which the Holy Spirit is received (John 3:8). (86)

Along with the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we learn more about the miracles as recorded in the Book of Acts. It is again the Apostle Peter (Acts 2:22; 10:38) who helps us understand what the miracles of Jesus mean, summarizing Christ's ministry, as well as the ministry of the Apostles - empowered by the Holy Spirit, they perform miracles in order to point people to Jesus Christ. (87) So, even with other disciples perform miracles, such as Stephen (Acts 6:8-15) the broader gift of miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28) - such as Peter's judgment of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:9-11) as well as Paul's judgment of the false prophet Bar-Jesus (Acts 13:8-11) - are unique to the Apostolic ministry. (88) (89)

We can see here, that there is a similar confrontation between the Apostles - now empowered by the Holy Spirit - against different manifestations of evil, primarily the demonic realm, which Jesus had demonstrated in His own ministry. So, along with signs of healing (Acts 3:1-10, 10, 16; 4:8-10) and bringing people back to life from the dead (Acts 9:36-43; Acts 20:7-12) there are exorcisms evident as well (Acts 16:16-18). In this way, we see Christ's superiority over the spiritual realm, manifested in the works of the Apostles. (90)

At the same time, we realize that there are other examples of evil, such as practicing syncretism (that is, a combination of Jewish and pagan rituals with attempts to produce 'magical' signs) seen in Acts 19:13-20 in which ungodly Jewish exorcists fail at their attempt to cast out demons; significantly, though, this does not hinder the progress of the gospel, revealing the power and sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. (91)

Lastly, having a better insight in the Apostles' work, we are considering how the miracles are linked to the message of the gospel. It becomes clear that miracles and the gospel message cannot be separated, since they always point back to the cross. A good example of this is found in Acts 3:1-4:21 where the Apostle Peter shifts from the miracles of healing to declaring spiritual salvation. (92) Thus, the Apostolic ministry can be seen as an extension of Jesus' ministry in the Book of Acts, and are a unique display of God's grace evidenced in the miracles of the Apostles - they are attestations of God's message of salvation. (93)

To sum up, we see that the miracles in the Apostolic Age are a continuation of Jesus's miracles, thereby forming a unique sequence in Christ's ministry, as well as his apostles. (94) 'Apostles' are: Christ's representatives (Matthew 10:1-15), exercising unique authority in the early church (Acts 15:4, 6, 22, 23), performing signs, works and miracles (2

Corinthians 12:12), witnesses of the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1-2; 15:5-8), *only a part* of the beginning church (Ephesians 2:20), recipients of the Lord's divine revelation (Galatians 1:12) and are not anticipated after the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:8). (95) As such, once the Christian church was founded, the office and gift of Apostles stopped, since nobody is able to meet the qualifications specified in Acts 1:21-22. (96)

With the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we understand that all the miracles associated with the Apostles' work are supports that are recorded for us in the Bible to point us directly to Christ. While the miracles are remarkable in an by themselves, they always reveal Jesus' works, and are always *His* miracles. The authority Christ gives to His Apostles is thus, always linked to the reality of the Gospel, that is the proclamation of His vindication through the resurrection - evidenced expressly in the ministry of Peter and Paul - also seen in Peter's preaching at Pentecost. (97)

What we can also learn from this is the stern and firm warning against grieving the Holy Spirit (seen in the fate of Ananias and Sapphira), as well as staying away from all forms of evil (such as divination, sorcery, fortune-telling and the like) - a warning to all people, particularly believers (Revelation 21:8; 22:15). So, even without 'Apostles' today, we have their apostolic authority revealed to us in the Bible, and the Person and power of the Holy Spirit to help us embrace the 'miracle' of God's Work, giving us fresh insight and direction daily as we grow in our personal walk of faith with our Lord Jesus Christ. (98)

Are There Still Miracles Today?

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a ringing gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have absolute faith so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and exult in the surrender of my body, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no account of wrongs. Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be restrained; where there is knowledge, it will be dismissed. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial passes away.
When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I set aside childish ways. Now we see but a dim reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.
And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love.
(1 Corinthians 13 BSB)

Having considered the miracles in the Apostolic Age, as the Christian church begins, we are now thinking about a question, people often ask: “Are there miracles today?” As we had seen in the foregoing segments, there are many things the Bible tells us about miracles, and so we always have to make sure, we do not go above and beyond what God’s word says.

However, in short, if we understand who Jesus is - as our personal Lord and Savior - empowering us by the Holy Spirit and through His Word, the short answer to the above question is certainly “YES!”

So depending on who is asking this question and especially, *why*, a better question may be: “Does God answer prayers?” Even better yet: “Is God still sovereignly at work in the universe?” and *best* to ask: “Does Christ work in the hearts and lives of His children (believers) today?” The following is a response to these three questions, which will help us to formulate an answer to the above opening question about miracles today.

First, does God answer prayers? If we think about prayer and God answering our prayers as a kind of ‘miracle,’ the Bible does have something to say about this. For example, Jesus Himself teaches us how to pray, in the Lord’s Prayer:

“So then, this is how you should pray:
‘Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’”
(Matthew 6:9-13 BSB)

Here we see that prayer is not just an option, but a God-given requirement for all of His own. If we did not expect God to answer prayers, why would we pray in the first place? The truth is, what we learn from Jesus here is that in our prayers, there is an element of surrender to God's holiness and will (v. 9-10), God's provision for us (v. 11), God's call for us to forgiveness (v. 12) and God's protection from our own broken sin nature and Satan with his lies and deception (v. 13).

Often God answers our prayer(s) (in *His* perfect plan, purpose and timing) and He also provides sufficient evidence of His divine care and love for us, so that we do not need a miraculous 'sign,' or to distort our Christian witness by embellishing what God has done on our behalf. In other words, we can 'see' our God's work and His hand in our lives, and know in our hearts God is with us. (99)

Therefore, not only is Jesus alive today in heaven, as sovereign Lord of Lords and King of Kings, but He is also actively interceding on our behalf, on the basis of His ultimate sacrifice on the cross (2 Timothy 1:9-10) through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit amidst His children on earth. (100) Thus, as we understand who Jesus is, why He came and what He accomplished for us (on our behalf), on the cross, we know that God answers prayer, and so we do well to 'pray without ceasing' as the Apostle Paul instructs us:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6-7 BSB)

Next, we are addressing the question: "Is God still sovereignly at work in the universe?" The short answer is 'yes,' foremost, since He has given us His Word, the Bible, as demonstration of this sovereignty. Nevertheless, it is up to us to open the Bible daily and immerse ourselves in it:

This Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in all you do.
Have I not commanded you to be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
(Joshua 1:8-9 BSB)

At times, some people maintain that there are records of miracles outside the Bible, from which the Bible 'borrowed' its own miracles. However, the evidence for this is questionable at best and does not compare to the internal evidence in the Bible. (101) Along with such false propositions, are assertions other people make against the Bible, such as an outright denial that miracles are real - based on an 'Enlightenment worldview' - thereby claiming the Bible as being untrue. (102) What eludes those who make such assertions is that records of miracles in the Bible are never designed as a proof of God's existence. (103)

As such, faith in miracles as recorded in Scripture lines up with an appreciation of God's supernatural power, along with showing His sovereign plan of salvation for all mankind through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other words, Christ has accomplished the ultimate reversal of Adam's sin, from which - apart from Jesus - nobody is able to save himself (Romans 3:23; 5:12-21; 8:1-8). Thus, as we acknowledge our need for our Lord's forgiveness, we realize that He is actively and sovereignly at work in the universe. (104) Therefore, as believers, we have the miracle of God's self-revelation to us through the Bible, actively and sovereignly guiding us into His truth, through His living Word, as Jesus says:

"My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me."
(John 10:27 BSB)

Lastly, in addressing the question: "Does Christ work in the hearts and lives of His children (Christians) today?" In short: Yes. How so? Answer: through the Person and power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit arrived at Pentecost (Acts 2) following our Lord's resurrection and ascension, remarkably, as Jesus had promised prior to His death and resurrection:

"However, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and He will declare to you what is to come. He will glorify Me by taking from what is Mine and disclosing it to you. Everything that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is why I said that the Spirit will take from what is Mine and disclose it to you."
(John 16:13-14 BSB)

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the 'Trinity,' distinct from God - the Father, and God - the Son (Jesus Christ) forming the so-called 'God-head.' God exists in three separate, yet simultaneously, co-equal persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. So although the word *Trinity* itself is not used in Scripture, the Bible reveals this teaching (Genesis 1:26; Matthew 28:19). (105) As the above verses show (John 16:13-14) the Holy Spirit does not speak on His own, but only what He receives from Christ. Thereby, among other things, He teaches (John 14:26), witnesses (John 15:26),

searches (1 Corinthians 2:11), intercedes (prays for us, when we don't know what to pray for) (Romans 8:26-27) and can also be grieved (Ephesians 4:30). (106)

It is then the Holy Spirit who helps believers in their personal walk of faith. Thereby, He fulfills several functions (among others): First, He helps us avoid evil. This is crucial, since signs (or 'miracles') from God must be distinguished from works of so-called 'magic,' from works that are of satanic origin (Matthew 24:24) designed to deceive people, including believers (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:14; 16:14; 19:20). (107)

This is particularly important, when it comes to the use of spiritual gifts - that is God-given ability to edify the church, which is, the body of Christ and to look after other believers (1 Corinthians 12-14). It is vital here to understand, that such gifts must *always* be used to build up (help, support and truly love) other Christians, since any other expression of 'gifts' does not point to the cross, that is to Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit ensures that spiritual gifts are used properly and no Christian is without such a gift, which is always part of God-given service and mission. (108) In short, a spiritual gift prepares a believer for personal spiritual service (1 Corinthians 12:11) and another spiritual gift enables a believer to edify the church (Ephesians 4:11-13). (109)

In sum, we have seen that miracles still happen today. These are manifested in and through God's response to us (as believers) in our prayers. Also, through the Bible, that is God's 'living eternal word' and promise to us, we can see and experience that He is still sovereignly at work in the universe. In addition, through the Person and power of the Holy Spirit, Christ is actively at work in the hearts and lives of His children - helping us to avoid evil, giving us guidance and direction to participate in building His kingdom, as we use our spiritual gifts to look after other Christians (the church).

Miracles do not have to follow a single, perceivable, predictable pattern, since if they did do so, they would stop to be perceived as miracles. (110) Also, miracles have not stopped being miracles, simply because some claim they are myths, while others claim they are impossible. 'Science' and 'Enlightenment' philosophy has in no way refuted even the possibility of miracles, and to deny divine miracles may simply reveal a lack of faith in God's power. (111) So, in response to the opening question in this segment, we positively affirm that there are miracles today. Among the most significant of them is to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the sovereign Lord of the Universe, who loves us and cares for us in ways known (and often) unbeknownst to us.

Conclusion

…how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?
This salvation was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, and was affirmed by God through signs, wonders, various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will.
(Hebrews 2:3-4 BSB)

So, what can we learn from our foregoing exploration of miracles in the Bible, and especially, the miracles of Jesus Christ? For one, despite the challenges of defining what a miracle is, we have seen that it is possible to understand what a miracle points to, more precisely - as the Bible reveals - *to whom* miracles point to, namely Jesus Christ, as Messiah. As such, true miracles are signs God uses in the Bible to point back to Himself and reveal the truth about Him. (112) This is one of the main reasons Jesus performs such signs, thereby authenticating and substantiating His message, that is the gospel message, "the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 10:7). (113)

Looking at the kinds of miracles Jesus did, we not only see that they are hard to classify (if even) and that each and every one is unique, not following a predictable method or pattern. While some miracles are similar to those observable in the OT, there are some that are exclusive to Jesus, such as giving sight to the blind. Alongside OT prophecy about the Messiah, as 'God in the Flesh' our Lord's miracles become recognizable as having been wrought in God, that is revealing God in Christ, which some in Jesus' time, such as Nicodemus (a Pharisee), recognized (John 3:1-2). (114)

What Christ's miracles teach us, is that there are only two possible responses to Him and His message of salvation. One response is to reject Him, and the other is to accept Him as personal Lord and Savior. This is the difference between spending eternity separated from God (in hell), or eternity with God - that is, with Jesus Christ in heaven (John 3:16-21). Not unlike many of the unbelieving Pharisees in Jesus' time, the attempt today (coming out of the so-called 'Enlightenment') to explain away Jesus' miracles as 'irrational' or label them 'myths,' pervades much of present-day thought. (115)

However, such 'rational' thinking, may not be rational at all, given evidence in favour of Jesus Christ and the Christian message of the gospel. Hence, along with (at the very least) learning about and reading about Christ in the Bible, a person has to consider God's existence and God's nature, the relationship of death to sin, Christ's sinlessness, OT prophecies centuries prior to the actual event, the attestation of multiple witnesses testimony as well as their credibility. (116)

So, in short, a possible approach other than a rationalist or mystical approach - is the supernatural approach to miracles in Scripture, including Jesus' miracles - affirming thereby: that the biblical events happened, that they took place as recorded, that Scripture proclaims a divine event, that it is irrelevant to look for a natural cause, since God is the One who performed

the event, that the miracles in the Bible, and specifically the miracles Jesus did, as well as the fact of Christ's resurrection. (117)

The miracles Christ's disciples did, during His early ministry and after His death and resurrection (those miracles accomplished by a specific group of disciples, 'the Apostles') are similar to Christ's miracles, but never surpass His miracles. As such, the miracles (signs) Jesus does always point to a deeper reality that is perceivable through faith. (118) As the biblical canon comes to a close, the purpose of Jesus' miracles done primarily through the Apostles, accomplish their goal, namely authenticating God's Word, that is the Bible. (119)

Lastly, in response to the question if miracles happen today, the answer is 'Yes!' Christ's divine immutability, foremost His resurrection, show that God can and does still operate sovereignly in the universe, i.e. nothing can stop God's plan and purpose. (120)

Jesus' answering our prayers, as believers, as well as Jesus' 'outpouring' of the Holy Spirit to empower believers for mission (Acts 2:1) shows God's ongoing work in the universe. (121) The Holy Spirit providing spiritual gifts (as 'signs') to help Christians grow in their personal walk of faith with Christ, and also gifts that (always) are given to edify and look after other believers (the church), are a foretaste of God's final victory over Satan and his evil works - to be consummated at Christ's Second Coming. (122)

God's greatest gift, though, giving us His Word (that is Jesus Christ as 'the Word') and coming to us as 'God in the Flesh,' and providing us with the written manifestation of His eternal promise of salvation (the Bible) is the greatest miracle of all!

The Bible tells us:

"Salvation exists in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."
(Acts 4:12 BSB)

Therefore, if we consider the 'miracles' Christ (and only He) offers, namely Jesus rescuing His people from sin, which is the main theme of the gospel - eternal salvation - we realize this is a call to humility and repentance. Christ died for us on the cross, lives in us (as believers) (John 15:4; 17:26; Colossians 1:27) and has invited us to embrace Him in His death and resurrection life (Romans 6:3-10; Colossians 2:12, 20; 3:1). (123) This should prompt all of us to heed our Lord's Words: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:8) (BSB). Amen.

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Amen.

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHART A				
HEALING MIRACLES	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
The Leper's Prayer	8:2-4	**1:40-42**	5:12-13	
The Faith of the Centurion	**8:5-13**		7:1-10	
Jesus Heals at Peter's House	8:14-15	**1:30-31**	4:38-39	
The Demons and the Pigs	8:28-34	**5:1-15**	8:27-35	
Jesus Heals a Paralytic	9:2-7	**2:3-12**	5:18-25	
The Woman with	9:20-22	**5:25-29**	8:43-48	

bleeding				
Jesus Heals Two Blind Men	**9:27-31**			
The Mute, Demon-possessed Man	**9:32-33**			
The Man with a Shriveled hand	12:10-13	**3:1-5**	6:6-10	
The Blind, Mute, Demon-possessed Man	**12:22**		11:14	
The Faith of the Canaanite Woman	**15:21-28**	7:24-30		
The Boy With an Evil Spirit	17:14-18	**9:17-29**	9:38-43	
Jesus Heals Two Blind men (also Bartimaeus)	20:29-34	**10:46-52**	18:35-43	
The Deaf and Mute Man		**7:31-37**		
Jesus Expels and Unclean Spirit		**1:23-26**	4:33-35	
The Blind Man at Bethsaida		**8:22-26**		
Jesus Heals a Disabled Woman			**13:11-13**	
Jesus Heals a Man with Dropsy			**14:1-4**	
The Ten Lepers			**17:11-19**	
Jesus Heals the High Priest's Servant			**22:50-51**	
Jesus Heals the Official's Son				**4:46-54**
The Sick Man at the Pool of Bethesda				**5:1-9**
Jesus Heals the Man Born Blind				**9:1-7**

CHART A (Continued)

MIRACLES OF RAISING THE DEAD	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
The Raising of Jairus's Daughter	9:18-19, 23-25	**5:22-24, 38-42**	8:41-42, 49-56	
Jesus Raises a			**7:11-15**	

Widow’s Son				
The Death of Lazarus				**11:1-44**
MIRACLES SHOWING POWER OVER NATURE				
Jesus Calms the Storm	8:23-27	**4:37-41**	8:22-25	
Jesus Walks on Water	14:25	**6:48-51**		6:19-21
The Feeding of the Five Thousand	14:15-21	**6:35-44**	9:12-17	6:6-13
The Feeding of the Four Thousand	**15:32-38**	8:1-9		
The Temple Tax - Coin in Fish	**17:24-27**			
Jesus Curses the Fig Tree	21:18-22	**11:12-14, 20-25**		
The Large Catch of Fish			**5:4-11**	
Turning Water Into Wine				**2:1-11**
The Other Large Catch of Fish				**21:1-11**

Miraculous Events Surrounding Jesus Christ (Selection)

CHART B

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Virgin Conception and Birth	1:18-25		1:26-2:20	
Holy Spirit Descends and Voice Speaking from Heaven	3:16-17	1:9-11	3:21-22	1:29-34
The Transfiguration of Jesus	17:1-8	9:2-8	9:28-36	
Voice Speaking from Heaven				12:27-33
Jesus Says “I am He” and Soldiers and Officials Fall to Ground				18:4-6
Heals Ear of High Priest’s Servant			22:50-51	
Darkness Falls and Temple Curtain is Torn from Top to Bottom	27:45, 51	15:33, 38	23:44-45	
Earthquake and Dead Bodies of Saints Raised	27:52-56			
Earthquake (Matthew) and Angels Appear	28:1-7	16:5-7	24:4-7	20:11-13
Jesus’ Resurrection Appearances and His Ascension (Luke)	28:9-20		24:13-53	20:14-29; 21:4-23

Adapted from Brown, C. "Miracle." In vol. 3 of *International Bible Encyclopedia*, Fully Revised. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986., p.374.

Jesus’ Seven Signs and What They Reveal About Jesus in the Gospel of John

CHART C

Sign	Meaning	Bible Verse
Changing Water Into Wine	Jesus as source of life.	John 2:1-12
Healing the Son of a Nobleman	Jesus is supreme over space.	John 4:46-54
Healing Lame Man at Bethesda Pool	Jesus is superior over time.	John 5:1-17
Feeding the Five Thousand	Jesus as the bread of life.	John 6:1-14
Walking on Water and	Jesus is superior over	John 6:15-21

Calming a Storm	nature.	
Healing Man Born Blind	Jesus as light of the world.	John 9:1-41
Bringing Lazarus Back to Life from the Dead	Jesus is superior over life and death.	John 11:17-45

Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.343.

God's Ten Plagues Inflicted on Egypt Through the Prophet Moses From the Book of Exodus

CHART D

The Plagues	The Outcome
1. Blood (7:20)	Pharaoh's heart hardened (7:22)
2. Frogs (8:6)	Pharaoh pleads for relief, promises freedom (8:8), heart hardened (8:15)
3. Lice (8:17)	Pharaoh's heart hardened (8:19)
4. Flies (8:24)	Pharaoh bargains (8:28), but heart is hardened (8:32)
5. Livestock diseased (9:6)	Pharaoh's heart hardened (9:7)
6. Boils (9:10	Pharaoh's heart hardened (9:21)
7. Hail (9:23)	Pharaoh pleads relief (9:27), promises freedom (9:28), but heart is hardened (9:25)
8. Locusts (10:13)	Pharaoh bargains (10:11), begs relief (10:17), but heart is hardened (10:20)
9. Darkness (10:13)	Pharaoh bargains (10:24), but heart is hardened (10:27)
10. Death of firstborn (12:29)	Pharaoh and the Egyptians plead Israel to leave Egypt (12:31-33)
God increased His signs and wonders in the land of Egypt so that the Egyptians might recognize that *He* is the Lord.	

Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.28.

CHART E	
Elijah's Miracles From the Books of 1 & 2 Kings	Elisha's Miracles From the Book of 2 Kings
Shut up the heavens causing a drought for three years. (1 Kings 17:1)	Transforms water from bad to good. (2 Kings 2:19-22)
Multiplied flour and oil for a widow (1 Kings 17:14-16)	Raises the dead (2 Kings 4:18-37)
Raised a widow's son from the dead (1 Kings 17:17, 22-23)	Multiplies food (2 Kings 4:1-7, 42-44)
Defeated the prophets of Baal with fire from heaven (1 Kings 18:25-38)	Heals a man with leprosy (2 Kings 5)
Brought rain to end drought (1 Kings 18:41-45)	Suspends laws of gravity in relation to water (causes axe head to float) (2 Kings 6:1-7)
Destroyed 51 soldiers with fire and lightening (2 Kings 1:9-12)	Brings blindness upon a Syrian army (2 Kings 6:13-23)
Parted the waters of the Jordan River (2 Kings 2:8)	

Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010., p.116-118.

Comparison of the Apostles - Peter and Paul In Book of Acts CHART F	
Peter	Paul
Heals man born lame. (3:1-11)	Heals man born lame. (14:8-18)
By his shadow people are healed. (3:15, 16)	People touched by aprons or handkerchiefs are healed. (19:11, 12)
Jews become jealous because of his success. (5:17)	Jews become jealous because of his success. (13:45)
Confronting a sorcerer, named Simon. (8:9-24)	Confronts a sorcerer, named Bar-Jesus. (13:6-11)
Brings back Tabitha (Dorcas) to life. (9:36-41)	Brings back Eutychus to life. (20:9-12)
Imprisoned and miraculously released by God. (12:3-19)	Imprisoned and miraculously released by God. (16:25-34)

Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book Of Bible Maps And Charts*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas
Nelson, 2010., p.351.

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May God bless you and keep you.

Pastor John

Amen.